

Mary Lazich

Wisconsin State Senator • Senate District 28



Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections Testimony Senate Bill 223/AB 306 October 13, 2011

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections about Senate Bill 223 (SB 223).

SB 223 allows the Department of Transportation to issue permits for trucks with six or more axels carrying agricultural products up to 90,000 pounds. Agricultural products include fruit, vegetables, grain, and livestock.

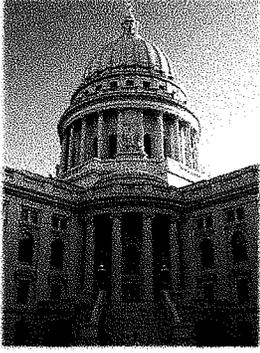
SB 223 requires applicants for permits to carry 90,000 pounds with six or more axels to use the Department of Transportation's electronic application system. Applications must also include the routes used. For routes that include roads under the jurisdiction of local governments, local officials must grant written approval from the official in charge of maintenance of the local highway. The bill **does not** impact the ability of local governments to post their bridges or roadways.

The recently completed Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Study indicated there are benefits to allowing 90,000 pound trucks with six axels to operate on our highways. The study reveals semi trucks carrying 90,000 pounds with six axels deliver the same volume of goods faster, using less fuel and fewer trips. SB 223 will reduce the number of trucks on the road thereby reducing the wear and tear on highways.

Under current federal law, trucks carrying 90,000 pounds with six axels are not allowed to operate on the Interstate system, with the exception of portions of I-39, however federal legislation with considerable bipartisan support being considered. SB 223 provides upon approval of federal law, trucks could operate on the interstate system.

SB 223 does not require DOT to prepare a report because DOT recently completed the Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Study that contains the same or similar information that would be contained in a report about this bill.





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Testimony of Amy Winters, Contract lobbyist for Gold'n Plump Poultry on SB 223, pertaining annual or consecutive month permits for certain overweight vehicles or vehicle combinations transporting agricultural products.

Chairman Lazich, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 223. My Client, Gold'n Plump Poultry is very supportive of this bill and urges your support and prompt passage.

Gold'n Plump is the largest broiler producer in the upper Midwest with operations in Minnesota and Wisconsin; they compete by fractions of pennies for market share against much larger US broiler companies such as Tyson and Perdue.

The increased weight limits that would be allowed under SB 223 would be a significant help to them in continuing to compete in their industry. With fuel, utility and feed costs more than doubling the last few years, Gold'n Plump has needed to continually find ways to increase efficiency to stay viable.

In Wisconsin, Gold'n Plump has 500 employees and partners/contracts with 154 Wisconsin farm families, guaranteeing them a stable income and helping to provide a strong local economy. They also just completed a 5 year, 53 million dollar state of the art expansion that has resulted in increased production from 740,000 birds per week to 960,000 birds per week. This has helped their bottom line, but they are still not where they expected to be when they started the expansion and their goal of adding additional employees.

Allowing more freight to be transported in each load will allow Gold'n plump to take significantly fewer trips saving on fuel and truck maintenance. Gold'n Plump expects that they will save between \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually in costs to haul live birds and feed between their facilities and their grower's barns which are scattered in a 60 miles radius of Arcadia. They will be configuring their trucks with seven axles to meet the federal bridge formula with their shorter trucks that are needed to navigate tight turning radiuses on many of their growers' farms.

Studies in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa all confirm that a 90,000 lbs six axle weight configuration has a lower load equivalency factor and causes less road damage than the current 80,000 lbs on 5 axle configuration. The 90,000 on six also does not increase stress on bridges. This bill makes sound economic sense for Wisconsin's agriculture industry as well as for the state's transportation infrastructure.

Thank you Chairman Lazich for introducing this important measure and showing companies like Gold'n Plump that Wisconsin is in fact open for business.



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections

FROM: Douglas Parrott, Legislative Associate

DATE: October 13, 2011

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 222 and Senate Bill 223 (SB 222 and SB 223)

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) knows the ability to move freight as efficiently as possible throughout Wisconsin is important to the state's economy. WCA understands the need for Wisconsin's businesses to be able to compete nationally as well as globally.

The WCA platform has a position opposing increasing allowable truck weights on county roads. However, WCA recognizes that it is a matter of when not if allowable weights on Wisconsin roads will be increased. While we oppose SB 222 and SB 223 as currently written, it is our hope the bills could be improved by adding several provisions.

WCA acknowledges the *Wisconsin Truck Size and Weight Study* concluded that trucks carrying 90,000 pounds on six axles causes less impact than a truck carrying 80,000 pounds on five axles. Many local bridges throughout the state unfortunately cannot handle the current allowable weights and are in no condition to handle increased weights. WCA believes that if allowable truck weights will be increased on state and local roads then a priority route analysis needs to be performed to identify what infrastructure on those routes needs to be upgraded.

Once those local bridges and roads are identified it is imperative to upgrade them as quickly as possible to be able to fully utilize the priority routes. WCA believes that a funding source be included in SB 222 and SB 223 to help begin funding those projects. Absent the ability to improve local bridges and deficient roads, counties will be forced to post those roads and bridges and restrict access to avoid a potential dangerous situation. This is a scenario that benefits no one.

While WCA opposes SB 222 and SB 223 as currently written, we believe the bills can be improved to a point that lessens the impact on county infrastructure. WCA appreciates Chairperson Lazich and the Department of Transportation asking WCA for input on this issue and we look forward to continuing to work with the DOT on addressing the issue of improving the local infrastructure and identifying priority routes. WCA will be attending the Governor's Freight Summit in November and intends to be a part of the solution to these issues.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.